

HOUSE RESOLUTION 319

By Gilmore

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the month of April as "Second Chance Month" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, every person is endowed with human dignity; and

WHEREAS, redemption and second chances are American values; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 65 million American citizens have a criminal record; and

WHEREAS, daily in Tennessee, 100,000 individuals are currently either incarcerated or under probation and supervision of the Department of Correction, and data shows that approximately ninety-five percent of those in state prison will be released to their communities; and

WHEREAS, individuals with a criminal record often face a "second prison" of significant barriers, also known as collateral consequences; and

WHEREAS, many of these collateral consequences fail to provide any proven public safety benefit, are mandatory, and take effect automatically, regardless of the seriousness of the offense, the time passed since the offense, or the individual's efforts to make amends and earn back the public's trust; and

WHEREAS, the inability to find gainful employment and other collateral consequences of conviction inhibit the economic mobility of people with a criminal history, which negatively impacts the well-being of their children and families for generations; and

WHEREAS, collateral consequences contribute to recidivism, increased victimization, decreased public safety, and lost economic output for the State of Tennessee and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Prison Fellowship, TN NAACP will sponsor a public forum, a press conference, and a job fair in the month of April in order to raise awareness of the obstacles that

people with a criminal record face and to provide opportunities for members of the community to participate in activities that provide a second chance for those who were formerly incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, April 21, 2018, is the anniversary of the death of Charles Colson, who used his second chance following his incarceration for a Watergate-related crime to found Prison Fellowship, the nation's largest Christian nonprofit organization serving prisoners and their families; and

WHEREAS, the commemoration of April as "Second Chance Month" can increase public awareness about the need for closure for those with a criminal record and about opportunities to provide second chances; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we join with the members of Prison Fellowship as they commemorate the month of April as "Second Chance Month" in Tennessee to honor the work of communities, governmental institutions, nonprofits, congregations, employers, and individuals in removing unnecessary legal and societal barriers that prevent individuals with a criminal record from becoming productive members of society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.